

UNCLASSIFIED

E53  
Page: 1

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02730 01 OF 04 242141Z  
ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	OIC-02
	CIAE-00	EB-00	DINT-05	DODE-00	H-01	IO-19	NSCE-00
	NSF-01	NSAE-00	COME-00	L-03	PM-10	EPA-01	INRE-00
	OES-09	ACDA-12	USIE-00	DOEE-00	CEQ-01	PRS-01	E-01
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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4072  
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 BOGOTA 02730

STATE FOR ARA/AND  
STATE PLEASE PASS TO U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AGENCY, INTERNATIONAL DIVISION

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: SENV, EPET, PTER, CO  
SUBJECT: ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON  
CANO-LIMON OIL PIPELINE

REF: BOGOTA 1375 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH THE PRESS HAS DECRIED THE  
EXTENSIVE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE FROM THE 20 GUERRILLA  
SABOTAGE ATTACKS ON THE CANO-LIMON-COVENAS OIL PIPELINE  
BETWEEN JANUARY 12 AND FEBRUARY 9, OIL INDUSTRY SOURCES  
BELIEVE THE DAMAGE IS LESS SEVERE. POST HAS OBTAINED  
FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE FEBRUARY 9 ATTACK THAT SENT  
OIL INTO VENEZUELA AND A MORE DETAILED LIST OF THE  
PIPELINE ATTACKS. END SUMMARY

2. ON FEBRUARY 22, ECONOFF MET WITH

B6

[REDACTED] OF OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM, TO DISCUSS THE  
DAMAGE RESULTING FROM THE 20 SABOTAGE ATTACKS BETWEEN  
JANUARY 12 AND FEBRUARY 9 BY THE GUERRILLA GROUP ELN

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DATE/CASE ID: 1 NOV 2002 200201334  
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.6(6)  
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 23 FEB 2013

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Page: 2  
Channel: n/a

(PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY) ON THE CANO LIMON-COVENAS PIPELINE.

B6

PROVIDED US WITH THE FOLLOWING TABLE LISTING THE ATTACKS, DATE, LOCATION, CAUSE, AND ESTIMATED AMOUNT SPILLED.

(1) DATE: JANUARY 12  
LOCATION: PY KM 6 AND 213, LAS MONAS  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, GAS AND BUTANE BURNT, FIRE CONTROLLED  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 15  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 3773 MM OF GAS PRODUCTION

(2) DATE: JANUARY 12  
LOCATION: P/L KM 466 AND 500, EL CARMEN CREEK  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, SPILL REACHED SIMANA RIVER  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 16  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 25,000 BBLS

(3) DATE: JANUARY 12  
LOCATION: P/L KM 528 AND 100, SOLEDAD  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, OIL CAUGHT FIRE, ONE HECTARE AFFECTED  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 15  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 2,200 BBLS

(4) DATE: JANUARY 13  
LOCATION: P/L KM 401, LA CAMPANA  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 02730 01 OF 04 242141Z

EVENT: SABOTAGE, SPILL REACHED TARRA AND CATATUMBO RIVERS  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 17  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 10,000 BBLS

(5) DATE: JANUARY 13  
LOCATION: P/L KM 436/437, LAS FLORES  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, SPILL REACHED TARRA AND CATATUMBO RIVERS  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 17  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 10,000 BBLS

(6) DATE JANUARY 15

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

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Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 3

Channel: n/a

LOCATION: P/L KM 99 AND 800 BOJABA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, PIPE DENTED BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 16  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 2,000 BBLS

(7) JANUARY 15  
LOCATION: P/L KM 45, LA ESMERALDA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, OIL CONTAINED IN APPROXIMATELY ONE  
FORESTED HECTARE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 17  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 4,000 BBLS

(8) DATE: JANUARY 17  
LOCATION: P/L KM 493.75, LV 31, PELAYA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE EXPLOSIVE DEVICE, 50 PERCENT REDUCTION  
P/L  
COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 20  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 2,000 BBLS

(9) DATE: JANUARY 17  
LOCATION: P/L KM 121 AND 300, CUBUGON

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02730 02 OF 04 242142Z  
ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	OIC-02
	CIAE-00	EB-00	DINT-05	DODE-00	H-01	IO-19	NSCE-00
	NSF-01	NSAE-00	COME-00	L-03	PM-10	EPA-01	INRE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 04 BOGOTA 02730

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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
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Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 4

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TAGS: SENV, EPET, PTER, CO  
SUBJECT: ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, SPILL REACHED ARAUCA RIVER  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 19  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 2,000 BBLS

(10) DATE: JANUARY 18  
LOCATION: P/L KM 71, SARAVENA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 22  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(11) DATE: JANUARY 18  
LOCATION: P/L KM 680, SAN PEDRO  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 21  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 250 BBLS  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 02730 02 OF 04 242142Z

(12) DATE: JANUARY 18  
LOCATION: P/L KM 680 AND 30, SAN PEDRO  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 21  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 250 BBLS

(13) DATE: JANUARY 20  
LOCATION: P/L KM 16.9, EL CARANAL  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L DENTED BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 22  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 1,000 BBLS

(14) DATE: JANUARY 21  
LOCATION: P/L KM 66  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE JANUARY 23  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(15) DATE: JANUARY 21  
LOCATION: P/L KM 732M ALTOS SINCELEJO  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 24  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(16) DATE: JANUARY 22  
LOCATION: P/L KM 171.4, SAN BERNARDO

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 4

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 5  
Channel: n/a

EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 26  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(17) DATE: JANUARY 23  
LOCATION: P/L KM 411 AND 800. EL ASERIO  
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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 02730 02 OF 04 242142Z

EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 31  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 10,000 BBLS

(18) DATE: JANUARY 24  
LOCATION: P/L KM 53 AND 300, LA ESMERALDA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 25  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(19) JANUARY 28  
LOCATION: P/L KM 85 AND 500, SARAVENA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: JANUARY 29  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 6,000 BBLS

(20) DATE: JANUARY 29  
LOCATION: P/L KM 485 AND 300, PELAYA  
EVENT: DEFECTIVE WELD  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: FEBRUARY 1  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 0 BBLS

(21) DATE: FEBRUARY 9  
LOCATION: P/L KM 403, LA CAMPANA  
EVENT: SABOTAGE, P/L BROKEN BY EXPLOSIVE DEVICE  
REPAIR COMPLETION DATE: FEBRUARY 12  
ESTIMATED LOSS: 50,000

TOTAL ESTIMATED LOSSES 124,700 BBLS.

4. OXY ADMITS THAT ITS TOTAL FIGURE OF 124,700 BBLS  
SPILLED IS TOO LOW.

B1

CONFIDENTIAL

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 5

UNCLASSIFIED

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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 6  
Channel: n/a

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 02730 02 OF 04 242142Z

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02730 03 OF 04 242143Z

ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	OIC-02
	CIAE-00	EB-00	DINT-05	DODE-00	H-01	IO-19	NSCE-00
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	OES-09	ACDA-12	USIE-00	DOEE-00	CEQ-01	PRS-01	E-01
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R 242143Z FEB 88

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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 03 OF 04 BOGOTA 02730

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TAGS: SENV, EPET, PTER, CO

SUBJECT: ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON

B1

5. SENIOR ECOPETROL AND OXY OFFICIALS TOLD US PRIVATELY  
THAT HUMAN ERROR WAS TO BLAME FOR THE SIZE OF THE  
FEBRUARY 9 SPILL. ACCORDING TO THESE OFFICIALS, THE  
ECOPETROL FIELD TEAM REPAIRED TWO BREAKS IN THE  
PIPELINE, NOT REALIZING THAT THERE WAS A THIRD BREAK.  
THINKING THE LINE WAS FULLY REPAIRED, ECOPETROL ORDERED  
PUMPING TO RESUME. ECOPETROL ATTRIBUTED THE LACK OF  
PRESSURE IN THE LINE TO THE FACT THAT IT WAS EMPTY SINCE  
PUMPING HAD CEASED ON JANUARY 12. BY THE TIME ECOPETROL  
CONFIDENTIAL

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 6

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 7

Channel: n/a

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 02730 03 OF 04 242143Z

REALIZED THE LINE WAS STILL BROKEN, AT LEAST 96,000 BBLS HAD SPILLED. THIS VERSION OF EVENTS IS NOT WIDELY KNOWN. MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE ECOPETROL WAS SLOW IN REACHING THE LOCATION OF THE BREAK AND SHUTTING DOWN THE LINE. [REDACTED] NOTED THAT THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE AREA MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID A SPILL OF LESS THAN 70,000 BBLS FROM ALMOST ANY BREAK OVER THE CATATUMBO RIVER.

B6

6. [REDACTED] SAID IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH OF THE OIL SPILLED FEBRUARY 9 ENTERED VENEZUELA. NATURAL CONDITIONS AIDED DISPERSAL. HE EXPLAINED THAT SINCE CANO LIMON CRUDE IS LIGHT, 40 TO 50 PERCENT OF THE OIL SPILLED EVAPORATED WITHIN HOURS. MUCH OF THE REST WAS NATURALLY DISPERSED DUE TO THE WILDLY CHURNING RIVERS AND THE TERRAIN OF THE AREA. THE STATE OF THE RIVERS WAS PARTICULARLY FORTUNATE. ONLY A FEW WEEKS BEFORE, THE RIVERS WERE MUCH CALMER AND WOULD HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DISPERSE THE SPILL SO QUICKLY. THE CHURNING WATERS ALSO LESSENED ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE BY BREAKING UP THE SPILL RATHER THAN HAVING IT MOVE DOWNSTREAM IN A SINGLE MASS, SMOOTHERING THE FISH AND OTHER ANIMALS UNDERNEATH.

B6

7. OXY DID NOT HAVE A FIGURE ON HOW MUCH OIL VENEZUELA HAD RECOVERED FROM THE FEBRUARY 9 SPILL OTHER THAN THE 10,000 BBLS FIGURE CITED IN THE COLOMBIAN PRESS. PRESS REPORTS ALSO SAID VENEZUELA WAS USING THE CRUDE TO REPAVE ROADS, AND THAT ECOPETROL HAD AGREED TO NEGOTIATE DAMAGE PAYMENTS.

8. THE BOGOTA PRESS CARRIED EXTENSIVE FRONT PAGE STORIES ON THE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE OIL SPILLS. EL TIEMPO GAVE A DRAMATIC ACCOUNT OF THE

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PAGE 03 BOGOTA 02730 03 OF 04 242143Z

"80,000 BBLS" OIL SLICK FLOATING DOWN THE CATATUMBO RIVER TOWARD VENEZUELAN NATIONAL PARKS. IN ADDITION, THE "35,000 BBLS" SPILLED INTO THE SIMANA RIVER WAS THREATENING TO REACH THE ECONOMICALLY VITAL MAGDELENA RIVER IN CENTRAL COLOMBIA. THE PRESS REPORTED THAT RICE CROPS HAD BEEN RUINED, AND PEOPLE LIVING ALONG THE

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 7

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL  
Current Handling: n/a  
Document Number: 1988BOGOTA02730

Page: 8  
Channel: n/a

AFFECTED RIVERS WERE SUFFERING FROM DIARRHEA,  
DEHYDRATION, AND DERMATITIS.

9. AN ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP CALLED "GREEN FORCE" TOOK OUT A FULL PAGE AD ON THE BACK PAGE OF EL ESPECTATOR ATTACKING THE "TERRORISTS" FOR THEIR ATTACKS ON THE PIPELINE WHICH "BLOODIED ALL COLOMBIANS." THE AD CHARGED THAT THE TERRORIST GROUP HAD LEFT 80,000 IMMEDIATE VICTIMS INCLUDING SMALL FARMERS IN THE LA GLORIA DISTRICT (CESAR DEPARTMENT) WHERE 10,000 HECTARES OF CROPS WERE THREATENED BY OIL AND CONTAMINATED WATER. WATER SYSTEMS WERE REPORTEDLY RENDERED USELESS IN THE VILLAGES OF SIMANA, SALOA, ZAPATOSA, AND AYACUCHO, AND THREATENED IN OTHER AREAS. IN ADDITION, THOUSANDS OF FISH WERE KILLED, "DIRECTLY AND GRAVELY AFFECTING THE FOOD SUPPLY OF THE FAMILIES WHO LIVE ALONG THE RIVERS." THE AD CLAIMED AN ADDITIONAL 70,000 FISHERMEN WHO SURVIVE OFF THE MAGDELENA RIVER WHERE THREATENED. ALTHOUGH "THIS TIME" INTENSE GOC EFFORTS WOULD LIKELY PREVENT THE SPILL FROM REACHING THE RIVER, THE AD SPECULATED, SUCH EFFORTS "WOULD PROBABLY FAIL THE NEXT TIME CAUSING ECONOMIC, HUMAN AND ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE OF INCALCULABLE PROPORTIONS."

10. ALTHOUGH HE NOTED THAT THE PUBLIC OUTCRY MIGHT HELP DETER THE ELN FROM FURTHER ATTACKS ON THE LINE, [REDACTED] FELT THE PRESS ACCOUNTS WERE PROBABLY EXAGGERATED. SIGNIFICANTLY, ECOPETROL HAD NOT INFORMED OXY OF ANY HEALTH OR ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. WHILE THERE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY ISOLATED ECOLOGICAL AND HEALTH EFFECTS FROM CONFIDENTIAL

B6

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BOGOTA 02730 03 OF 04 242143Z

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02730 04 OF 04 242144Z  
ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	OIC-02
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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 8

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page: 9  
Channel: n/a

T-01 /078 W  
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R 242143Z FEB 88  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4075  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 04 BOGOTA 02730

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THE SPILLS, [REDACTED] SERIOUSLY DOUBTED THAT THERE WOULD  
BE LONG-LASTING DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR TO PEOPLE.

[REDACTED] SAID ECOPETROL PREVENTED THE SPILLS FROM  
REACHING THE MAGDELENA RIVER, ALTHOUGH THE OIL PASSED  
THE SPILL CONTROL POINT IN SIMANA DESIGNED TO PROTECT  
THE MAGDELENA BECAUSE THE EQUIPMENT CALLED FOR IN THE  
SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN HAD NOT BEEN INSTALLED.

11. DESPITE SUCH PROBLEMS, [REDACTED] PRAISED ECOPETROL'S  
"HALLMARK" EFFORTS TO CONTROL AND CLEAN UP THE SPILLS.  
ACCORDING TO [REDACTED] ECOPETROL USED THE OXY-DEvised  
SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN AND FORMER OXY CONTRACTORS TO  
EFFECTIVELY CONTROL THE SPILLS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 02730 04 OF 04 242144Z

12. POST HAS OBTAINED A MORE DETAILED CONFIDENTIAL  
REPORT ON SPILL CLEAN UP EFFORTS AND WILL FORWARD IT TO  
INTERESTED USG AGENCIES UPON REQUEST.

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Current Class: CONFIDENTIAL

Page: 9

UNCLASSIFIED